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THE PRUSSIAN-POLISH SITUATION: AN EXPERIMENT IN ASSIMILATION

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There is a stage of social organization where solidarity of sentiment and action are more essential to the welfare of the group than ideas. This principle holds in the kinship group of primitive times, in the peasant house-community, and has its more absolute expression in animal colonies and gregarious groups.

Now these are the laws of the Jungle,
and many and mighty are they;
But the head and the hoof of the Law
and the haunch and the hump is—Obey!

The principle of primary or face-to-face relations, which Professor Cooley has made so useful to all of us, is one on which a society may best preserve its life so long as it can preserve a degree of isolation. Moreover, it is a type of relationship which, with its more immediate contacts, its loves and hates, its gossip and hospitality, its costumes, vanities, and self-sacrifices, lies nearer to the primal instincts and contains consequently more sentiment and warmth than is secured through the more abstract relations of the secondary group. In Southeastern and Slavic Europe I was more than once struck by the tendency of the individual of the higher cultural group to drop back into the lower. I am told that there is no case on record of a Magyarized Rumanian, but in Transylvania I met case after case of Rumanized Magyars. I remember particularly one village where an old Magyar woman, who spoke Rumanian very badly, insisted with vehemence, almost with tears, that she was a Rumanian, while the villagers winked and laughed. The Rumanian of this region stands only just above the Gipsy. Another striking fact in this eastern and southeastern fringe of Europe is that the lower cultural groups are, at least temporarily, pushing back those of the higher cultural levels. The Pole of Posen

is pushing back the Prussian, the Ruthenian is pushing back the Pole in Galicia, the Lithuanian is beginning to make headway against the Pole also at another point, and the Italian in Austria is pushing back the German. Naturally the isolated individual tends to be absorbed by the larger group, and the question of the expansion of the populations of the lower cultural levels is largely a matter of the birth rate and of the standard of living, but the question of the solidarity of sentiment in the more primary group and the force of this sentiment when organized toward certain ends, and inflamed through leadership, is an important factor in the struggle for nationality in Eastern Europe, and one which we must consider in connection with racial assimilation in general.

Now, I believe we all recognize that there are no races in Europe, properly speaking. There are only language-groups. But these groups have certain marks, of language, religion, custom, and sentiments, and feel themselves as races; and they struggle as bitterly for the preservation of these marks as if they were true races.

I think it is clear also that the smaller alien language-group, incorporated against its will in the larger state, behaves essentially as a primary group. That the state also behaves somewhat as a primary group in this connection is true, but the state is nevertheless a secondary organization acting through legislation and bureaucracy in its efforts to coerce the sentiments of the alien group and to assimilate it.

Among these efforts to assimilate an incorporated group, I have found those of Prussia in connection with the Poles of its eastern provinces perhaps the most interesting, because the policy was formulated by the man who formed the German Empire, and has been carried on with resourcefulness, system, and ferocity, and because, on the other hand, it discloses in a more complete way than I have found elsewhere the varieties of reaction which the coerced group may develop under this external pressure.

It is estimated by the German that during the nineteenth century 100,000 Germans in the eastern provinces of Prussia were Polonized, that is, they adopted the language, religion, and sentiments of the Poles. During this time the Poles were making no systematic effort in this direction. It seems to me that the main

force in operation was the attractive qualities of the Poles—and their more intimate, personal, face-to-face relations.

On the other hand it seems that the Polish population was at one time on the road to Germanization. In the period of serfdom the peasant had been so mercilessly exploited that he acquired a profound suspicion of the upper classes, and this remains a prominent trait in his character today. It has been hard to convince a peasant that anybody will do anything for him or for his community in a disinterested way. A leading Galician economist, himself peasant-born, informed me that when he returned to his native village and interested himself in its sanitation the peasants speculated on what he was going to get out of it for himself. But in the back of the peasant's head there lingered a tradition that he fared badly because the emperor was deceived by the nobility and did not know how the peasant was treated. And under the German government he began to be loyal (for Germany understands how to care for her people) and for a long time—until after the war with France—she treated the Poles without discrimination—protected them and let them alone. And they in turn began to be patriotic, to speak German and drink beer, and to be proud of the Prussian uniform. A Polish nobleman has recently admitted that if you should put a Prussian Pole into a press, German culture would pour in streams from every opening and pore in his body. Prussian Poles are much sought in Russian Poland and Galicia as agricultural overseers, but they become homesick and long for the time when they may end their banishment and return to Posen. And the aristocratic Poles were coming even more under German influence and unconsciously imitating German institutions and speech. I do not know how far this process of assimilation would have progressed, for there was arising a noticeable nationalistic movement—a movement dating back to the '30's.

At any rate, so long as the peasant felt that the government was friendly to him he paid little attention to agitators. But in 1873 he was attacked by the government. At this point Bismarck took a hand and decided to force the process of Germanization. He said he was not afraid of the Polish man, but of the Polish woman. She produced so many children. He undertook the task

with apparent confidence, but he was profoundly deceived in his judgment of the peasant. He said that the peasant who had shed his blood so generously for Germany was at heart a true German. The fact is, the peasant had been gradually losing sight of the fact that he was a Pole and the policy of Bismarck restored to him that consciousness.

It was a saying in Germany that the Prussian schoolmaster had won the battle of Sadowa, and it was Bismarck's policy to use the same schoolmaster in the Germanization of Posen. The German language was substituted for the Polish in the schools, and German teachers, preferably without a knowledge of Polish, were introduced into the schools. Now speech is one of the signs by which a people recognizes itself, and fear of the effacement of the signs of self-consciousness is somewhat like the fear of death. And this effacement of speech implied also the effacement of religion, for in the mind of the peasant speech and religion were identified. Ask a Pole his nationality and he will not improbably reply: "Catholic." He felt also, and the priest taught, that the good Lord did not understand German. At this point the peasant knew that the government was his enemy. He had heard it before from the priest and the nobility, but he did not believe it.

There is not the slightest doubt that the Prussian government at this point raised a devil which it has not been able to lay. This action, indeed, marked the beginning of what is now known as the Polish Peasant Republic in Posen. The direct consequences of this school policy were riots and school strikes. At Wreschen a number of women who entered a schoolhouse and rescued their children from a teacher were tried for violation of domicile and sentenced to two, three, and five years' imprisonment. In 1906 there followed a systematically organized school strike involving about 150,000 children. The children at the instigation of their parents, the priests, and the press, refused to answer in German. It seems that the behavior of the school officials was on the whole patient. But the strike had the effect of developing in the Polish children a hatred of the Germans. Indeed, this was probably the main object of the organizers of the strike. It may be that the Poles had planned precisely this, and expected no further results.

The next important move of the Prussian government was the establishment of a colonization commission, with the object of purchasing Polish land and settling it with German peasants. This commission has been in operation for 27 years, has expended about \$140,000,000 in the purchase of land, and the result is that the Poles have more land than they had at the beginning.

The next important move was a law prohibiting the construction of any buildings without a permit. This virtually meant that the Poles could not build on land newly acquired, nor build further on land already possessed; not even old buildings could be repaired nor chimneys renewed. It may be said at once that the Poles have almost completely nullified the force of this law by buying large estates and parceling them. The peasants then live in the manorial house, in the carriage house, the stable, the barns, the tenant houses, and by packing themselves in like sardines they have found that they save money.

And finally, in 1907 the government passed the expropriation act authorizing the legal seizure of any land which the colonization commission desired but could not purchase. This meant Polish land, and the action was forced by the fact that the Poles had developed so perfect a morale that practically no land was offered to the commission by Poles. This action aroused intense indignation, and was condemned by many Germans, notably by Professor Delbrück, who took the ground that a modern state could not resort to such methods and remain a modern state. It was thought and hoped by many members of the government voting for this measure that it would never be enforced—that it was to be used as a threat—but in 1912 the government began to carry out the policy of expropriation.

These are the main steps taken by the Prussian government in its experiment with the assimilation of the Poles, and the Poles claim that the government is making war on 4,000,000 of its people.

Before outlining the results of this policy I wish to point out that the peasant has been the main factor in the struggle on the Polish side. He was aroused (1) by the Prussian state, (2) by a small middle class of agitators and patriots, (3) by the press, (4) by the clergy, (5) by Polish business men, who developed in him an

immense land hunger and ministered to it. It is noticeable also that the nobility and revolutionary agitators made no headway and secured no effective organization until the national consciousness of the peasant had been aroused. Indeed, I have the impression that, generally speaking, the nobility and the priest were, so to speak, shamed into co-operation with this aroused consciousness of the peasant.

Coming then to the types of organization which the Poles have developed in their struggle with the Prussian, the Marcinkowski Association deserves, perhaps, the first mention, because it is the one important and successful organization antedating the period of Bismarck. Marcinkowski was a physician who after the revolution of 1831 had retired to Paris. But about 1836 a report reached him that the poor people in Posen were complaining of his absence, and he returned. In 1840 he formed a society for the education of Polish youth. His immediate purpose was the formation of a middle class. This society, with its central organization in the city of Posen, has about forty branch associations and gives what we call fellowships to about six hundred Polish young men who are studying in high schools and universities. Wherever these stipendiaries are located not only their studies but their habits are closely watched and reported on by resident Poles. They are also expected to pay back in course of time the money advanced to them, and to make in addition contributions to the funds of the society. An annual list of old stipendiaries making repayments and contributions, with the amounts, is published and commented on. Here, indeed, as everywhere, the Poles make use of comment and criticism very freely. If, for instance, the branch association in Gnesen has been very active and that in Mowgolino apathetic, the one is commended and the other rebuked in the annual report. Furthermore, the central association receives all funds collected by the branches, but returns to the branches the amount sent in, with an addition from the funds of the central association. But in this redistribution each branch is treated according to the zeal it has shown. For instance, in one year the district of Scrimm sent in about M. 1,500 and received back M. 5,000, while the district of Znin sent in about M. 400 and received back only M. 500.

Marcinkowski was also very successful in his insistence on what he called the "moral principle," that the nobility and well-to-do Poles who chose not to live in Posen were not released from their obligation to contribute to the Polish cause, but that they were rather under the greater obligation to do so—a sort of penalizing of the non-residents for their absence. This society is also the beneficiary of the courts of honor to which I may barely allude. The Poles are a litigious people, an attitude growing perhaps out of their previous communal system and the troubles arising from the periodical distribution of land. At any rate, going to law may be regarded as their national sport. From the adjudication of these cases the Prussian government was profiting in the way of fines, and the Poles have understood how to form an organization to which litigants voluntarily submit their grievances and to which they pay their fines. These fines are turned over to the Marcinkowski Association. The association has also been more instrumental than any other organization, with the exception perhaps of the press, in drawing the priests into the nationalistic movement. As early as 1841 the archbishop of Posen and Gnesen addressed a circular letter to the clergy of his diocese in which he said: "I urge the priests and chaplains and lay it upon them particularly forthwith to co-operate with this society, which will be a blessing to mankind, and appropriately to assist its noble and useful purpose." From the American standpoint the association is not rich. Its capital is about M. 1,400,000, and about half of its expenses are defrayed from the interest on its capital. Associated with the Marcinkowski Association are four other associations: (1) the West Prussian Educational Association, (2) the Association for Girl Students, (3) the Association for Girl Students of West Prussia, and (4) the Public Library Association.

In 1873 Maximilian Jackowski began to organize the peasants into associations, and in the first year founded 11 such associations; in 1880 he had personally founded 120 associations; at present there are more than 300 associations. During his life Jackowski traveled, wrote, and spoke unceasingly. His two main objects were the improvement of the economic condition of the peasant and the

preservation of the national spirit through a national organization. This organization was to be based on the peasant.

The peasant associations, each under a president, are divided into 26 districts, each under a vice-patron, and all are united in a central association under a patron. The monthly meetings of the associations are devoted to a discussion of matters of agriculture, though they serve also to foster the feeling of nationality. The annual district meetings under the vice-patrons bring out 350 members, and the annual general assembly of the associations in Posen has an attendance of about 1,000. And as the same date of meeting is selected by the Polish Association of Large Land Owners, Trades Unions and other societies, the meeting in Posen in the middle of March assumes the aspect of a national demonstration. Nevertheless politics and sentiment are strenuously disallowed in the meetings of the associations. This is not only essential to the existence of the associations under the Prussian government, but is regarded as intrinsically important. For the Poles thoroughly realize that their success and the realization of their emotional aims lie in business enterprise. They were at one time the most emotional people in the world, or bore that reputation—indeed the Pole has been called the *Slavus saltans*—but there is a legend that a deputation of Poles asked the historian Thierry in Paris what was a good program, and he said: "Get rich." And they have since followed that policy. It is by no means true that they have lost their sentiment; it is the force behind all, but they carry it in a different compartment.

The peasant associations have an official paper, the *Poradnik Gospodarski* ("Agricultural Messenger") which is perfectly adapted to the peasant's needs, and, I may say, to his psychology. The paper is indeed dull reading to the outsider, with its description of drainage, soils, manures, etc.; but we must remember that the peasant has an affection for the soil greater than that for all else; the soil is a part of his being. In the greatest of the novels based on the Slavic peasant, Reymont's *Cłopi* ("Peasants"), an old peasant who had received an injury to his head in a fight over some timber, and who had lain in a comatose condition for months, rises from

his bed one night and walks out over his land, and in the morning he is found dead in the fields. He had fallen face foremost, and the earth stopped his mouth and was clasped tightly in both of his hands. By an appropriate automatism he had in death embraced and kissed what was supremely dear to him. A people so disposed responds eagerly to suggestions about the soil. Formerly *Polnische Wirtschaft* was a synonym among the Germans for all that was sluttish. Now it is amusingly inappropriate as applied to Polish agriculture in Posen.

If the primary group is distinguished by face-to-face and sentimental relations I think it is correct to say that the land of the peasant was included in his group. And this land sentiment is the most important factor in the failure up to date of the plans of the colonization commission. It was not, indeed, the plan of the commission to buy peasant land, but to buy large Polish estates and partition them among German settlers. This plan worked very well for some years, because a sufficient morale was not immediately developed among the landed Poles to prevent the sale of some estates. But at the very beginning something occurred which the commission had not counted on—namely the German large land owners in West Prussia were much more eager to sell than the Poles. When it became known that the government was spending about M. 40,000,000 annually for land, there was a stampede of German owners to get in on the money. It was in vain that the commission pointed out that it did not wish German land, only Polish. The German land owner protested that he was obliged to sell, and that if the government did not purchase he would be compelled, in order to avoid ruin, to sell to Polish speculators. In fact, the commission was compelled to buy German land. As late as 1903 the commission bought from German owners land for about M. 40,000,000; in 1904 for M. 30,000,000; and in 1905 for M. 35,000,000. On the other hand the amount of land offered by Polish owners was always small in comparison with that of German owners, and at present practically no Polish land is offered. For instance, in 1903, 210,000 hectares of German land were offered to the commission, as against 35,000 hectares of Polish land; in 1904, 200,000 hectares, as against 20,000; and in 1905 the Germans offered 135,000 hectares,

and the Poles offered almost none. In this connection land speculation became rife and the price of land has doubled. Polish speculators began to purchase large Polish estates and parcel them out to Polish peasants, and to take over and parcel in the same way German estates refused by the colonization commission. They also began to outbid the government for German land, and to organize parceling banks and other associations to enable the Polish peasant to acquire land. It is here that the land-hunger of the Polish peasant became an important factor. On the Polish side the most daring and inventive land speculator was a certain Martin Biedermann. Among his inventions, two are most notable. The first is known as the "Biedermann clause." A German estate owner offered his estate to the commission. If this was declined he went to Biedermann and sold him the estate, with the reservation that he might have the privilege of withdrawing from the transaction within a month. The deed drawn with Biedermann's firm, say for M. 500,000, contained the following paragraph: "But if a third party [the colonization commission] enters into the transaction before [a given date] said party shall pay M. 30,000 more. But this sum shall be divided equally between the firm of Drweski & Langner [Biedermann's firm] and the estate owner X." At this point the commission might yield and buy the estate, in which case Biedermann's firm had a profit of M. 15,000. Otherwise the estate was parceled among Polish peasants. In the second place, Biedermann understood how to make out of land-buying a patriotic sport for rich Poles. The Pole is socially ambitious and lives very much for the approbation of his circle. Many of the attractive careers are closed to him; he has no place in the army, the government, or the university. If, then, a young man comes into an estate of some millions, and presently a large estate comes onto the market, it is suggested to him that it would be a fine thing to outbid the government and secure this for the Poles. He will have to pay dear, perhaps very dear, for his whistle, but to have his name on every Polish tongue and to be mentioned in many of the 600 newspapers and periodicals in the three parts of Poland is worth the M. 50,000 which he pays in excess of its value.

The heart of the peasant has been won to the Polish cause quite

as much through a system of small parceling banks as through the peasant associations. The peasant is usually in debt. Under the Polish custom the oldest son usually takes over the estate from the father and pensions him, and assumes the obligation of paying to the younger children the worth of their portions. On a small farm there may be ten or fifteen mortgages outstanding. Formerly, at any rate, this was so, and the mortgages were in the hands of money lenders, some of whom would welcome an opportunity to foreclose. So the peasant led an unhappy and harassed life. The Catholic clergy under the leadership of Wawrzyniak, a truly remarkable man, whom the Poles called the "King of Action," have been active in the organization of the parceling banks. At present, when a peasant is in difficulties, he speaks to his priest or to an officer of the local bank. His affairs are looked into, the small mortgages are taken up, and the bank lends him the necessary money. If the peasant is in trouble through bad management, drink, or other fault of his own, every influence is brought to bear on him to reform him and save his land. If it is necessary to sell a part or the whole of it, it at least does not fall into the hands of the Germans. These banks also furnish the peasant with the means to acquire new land.

Another device developed by the Poles in the land struggle may be called the "great family council," and is based on a peculiar trait of aristocratic Polish society. The noble Polish families are closely related by blood and marriage and show a minute personal interest in the private affairs of one another—a sort of friendly inquisitiveness which we should regard as offensive, but which among themselves is felt to be not only good form but a welcome expression of affection. It is in fact family life extended to a larger circle. This larger family circle is formally represented by a club in the city of Posen called the "Bazar," and not to be a member of this club is not to be in the better Polish world. When now it becomes known that a young land owner is not living properly, and that he is in danger of coming to ruin, a friend speaks to him and advises him to have a conference with the president of the club. This advice is practically mandatory. If he does not follow it he will receive a note from the president of the club requesting him to call and have a talk. If he ignores this he will be expelled

from the club. One of the by-laws of the club is that a member may be expelled for unbecoming conduct. If he is dropped from his club he is dropped from all the connections in life that mean most to him. So he goes. He is then asked how his affairs stand, what debts he has—everything. If he lies on this point, he is also expelled. He is then informed that a committee will take charge of his estate and place him on an annuity until his affairs are re-established. The most skilled men in Posen will then administer his estate at a nominal charge of say M. 500. He signs an agreement to this effect. A paid overseer may also be engaged for say M. 1,500. In this way the land is not lost to his creditors, above all it does not fall into German hands, and the young man may be reformed. It will be seen that the occasion presents a very favorable opportunity for conversion.

In the course of time the press has become the most violent if not the most influential force in the struggle for the development of Polish national spirit. Every small town has its newspaper, and it cannot be denied that some of the newspapers make a business of working on the emotions of the people in a way that not even the more responsible Polish leaders approve. A few editors in fact make it a part of their business to go to jail, and some papers are said to keep two editors, one to go to jail when the term of the other expires. A Mr. Kulerski, editor of the *Gazeta Grudzionska*, published at Graudenz, when sentenced for "exciting to violence," writes something like this: "Dear brothers and fellow-strugglers: When these words reach you, I shall be no longer a free man, but in prison. Therefore it is my wish to address a few final words to you from the threshold of the prison. My sentence has excited great joy among the Pole baiters, but the incident may be made to recoil on their heads if you will rally to the support of the *Gazeta Grudzionska*: 500 new subscribers for every day of imprisonment! That must now be your solution of the matter. If in this way 15,000 new subscribers are secured, our Polish cause will thereby secure a powerful impetus." I must repeat that this "business patriotism" has had a wide condemnation, but the *Gazeta Grudzionska* has a subscription list of 100,000.

Frequently recurring themes in the more sensational of the

newspapers are: Poland must become again an independent power; the Poles are neither true nor loyal Prussian subjects; the Prussians are unwelcome guests in the Polish land; no loyal Pole will illuminate his house or otherwise participate in any Prussian demonstration, such as the celebration of the emperor's birthday; the suppression of the Polish language is a device for killing the intelligence of Polish youth, because the mind cannot be developed normally in a foreign speech; no true Polish girl will marry a German; every true Pole will read the Polish newspapers; the German Catholic is the most dangerous and detestable form of Prussian.

Many of the papers have children's supplements, in which they print and answer letters from children, and praise their expressions of patriotism. Commenting on the report that a schoolboy had said: "William II is only a German king; our Polish king is named Ladislaus and is no longer alive," the paper *Praca* said: "This boy is a proof that nature itself rebels with violence and protests against the doctrine that we are or can be true and loyal German-speaking Poles." The development of the boycott of German and Jewish shops and manufactures has been a particular work of the press, and on this point it has been truly ferocious. Some papers have made it a policy to name or give the initials of Poles who buy from "Strangers," or "Hares," that is Germans, or from "Jerusalemites" or "Hook-noses." "The newly wed Mrs. A., a born Pole, and one who should feel herself particularly identified with Poles because she was recently a saleswoman in a Polish shop, was seen entering a German shop." "The Misses B. are patronizing the Jews. Is this a proper way to show respect for their recently deceased mother?" "And from whom has Mr. Anton bought the pretty necktie? It has indeed the national colors, but was bought from 'Strangers.'" "Swó! do swoich"—each to his own—that is, Buy only from your own people, has become a slogan. "God will punish those who buy from 'Strangers.'" Lists of Polish shops are printed, and lists of the "friends of our enemies" also. Against those selling land to the Germans the press is particularly violent. The following paragraph is from *Lech* (published in Gnesen), May 4, 1906: "Our community has taken steps,

and properly, too, to enrol in a special book the names of those who for a Judas penny have sold their land into the hands of the colonization commission, and in this book will be indicated also the name of the estate and its size, in order that our posterity may know of the infamous deeds of these betrayers of their country and at the same time of the indignation and contempt expressed by the community for the traitors, and may beware of staining its Polish name and heart by similar actions. It is only to be regretted that the pictures of these vendors are not to be contained in the 'black book.' If we only had their pictures before our eyes and could thus impress their features on our memories then we could easily know from whose path we should step aside, before whom we should spit, and whose hand we should decline to shake; for these infamous rascals who have so shamed our dear fatherland deserve nothing better."

It must be understood that the boycott is very real and that it extends to everything "made in Germany." The organization of the peasants has been used in the attempt to exclude all German agricultural implements and machinery. There was developed a plan to import from England and France everything which could not be supplied in Poland. In this respect the boycott has had only a limited success, for Polish firms have long-established relations with German manufacturers, and buy on long credit, and it has been found impossible to break off with them. In some cases Polish firms have been driven to an arrangement with German manufacturers whereby the latter supply the products, but stamped with the name of a Polish firm. But in general the boycott is very bitter, and this is especially so since the inauguration of the policy of expropriation in the fall of 1912.

There are some special psychological features which have tended to make this a losing fight for the Germans. The old German residents of Posen, as we have seen, were only too eager to sell their land to the government. It is not pleasant to be surrounded by and dependent on Poles. The new settlers also have not been altogether happy in their new home. Posen is not an attractive country in comparison with the Rhine region from which many of the settlers came. It is said that the soldiers of Napoleon exclaimed:

"Et voilà ce que les Polonais appellent une patrie!" But most of all, the old residents and the new have felt that they have a powerful patron in the government—that the government must stand by them, that what the individual does is not important, that the government will live and see to it that they live. School teachers receive extra pay for serving in Posen, and sluggish and boycotted German merchants send in an appeal to the Ostmark Verein and receive subsidies. This is the weakness of a secondary group. It is the principle of making something out of the government which we are familiar with among ourselves.

There has been also a growing feeling of discontent with the government policy among the large German land owners who otherwise have remained loyal. They have seen themselves gradually surrounded by small German settlers who take the place of the nobility whose estates have passed into the hands of the commission. Their social circle has been broken up and they find themselves isolated. They also feel that German prestige and the leadership of the nobility in politics is threatened by the influx of settlers, whom they call "the coddled children of the state." So in January, 1909, the Association of German Land Owners held a session in which a demand was made that the commission pay less attention to the settling of peasants and more to the development of large and medium-sized estates. "The peasant," they said, "is indeed politically enfranchised and sits in the community assemblies but without the leadership of the large estates and medium-sized estates he would be powerless." This precipitated a counter-movement among the German settlers. In March, 1909, 1,000 German peasants assembled in Gnesen and the settler Reinecke spoke on the theme: "Have we a vote or not?" and said: "We demand an advisory voice in the managing body of the colonization commission. We demand more part than heretofore in the provincial government, and we will guard ourselves against the establishment by new settlements of so-called permanent estates whose owners might serve as our leaders politically and economically. For the peasant is very well fitted to look out for his own interests and to choose leaders out of his own number. The Poles are our enemies. Against them we will protect ourselves, but

against our friends may God protect us.” And shortly afterward a German Peasant Association was formed. There is then at present a dangerous split in the German forces in the Ostmark, and the Poles have not hesitated to enlarge it. A Pole, Morawski by name, issued a very plausible pamphlet, which was taken seriously and echoed by a part of the German press, in which he sought to show that the nobility, both Polish and German, should combine against the rising peasant democracy, and he pointed out that a German song was already current in the provinces:

Michel sagt zu seinem Sohne:
Hol’ der Teufel die Barone,
Ob sie deutsch sind oder Polen,
Alle soll der Teufel holen.

Finally, the labor situation at present has an ominous outlook for the Germans. Of the laborers on the German estates 80 per cent are Poles, and these are now thoroughly saturated with the Polish spirit. Lately labor has been organized, and is in a position to strike effectively. But between the Association of Polish Laborers and the Association of Polish Estate Owners an agreement has been reached for the arbitration of all differences through committees. It is apparent that the Poles are therefore in a position to call a general labor strike on the German estates, and no greater calamity can be imagined than a general agrarian strike at harvest time. The Poles threatened to call such a strike if the Prussians carried out the expropriation policy. Why they did not do so I do not know, but I think it is because they did not want to disturb business. For, thanks to the land struggle and the train of events which I have indicated, Polish business has expanded enormously. Last year the president of the largest bank in Posen showed me a report of the condition of the bank. During the past twelve months it had done almost exactly the same amount of business that it had done in the whole of the preceding 24 years of its existence. And then there is the Polish woman who is still reproducing her kind in a generous way, and the question of nationality is after all largely a question of the birth-rate. At any rate, the Poles are quoting an old proverb that “the abbey lasts longer than the abbot.”